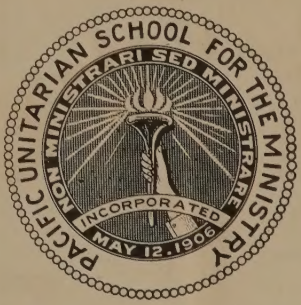
FRANCIS DAVID

WILLIAM C. GANNETT

BX
9869
D35
G3
1914
GTU
Storage



BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

THE GIFT OF

THE AUTHOR

For the Pacific Unitarian
School for the Ministry —
from W. C. Gannett
Aug. 7. 1914.

FRANCIS DAVID

FOUNDER AND MARTYR OF
UNITARIANISM IN HUNGARY

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

BY
WILLIAM C. GANNETT

Property of
CBSR
Please return to
Graduate Theologic
Union Library

LONDON
5 ESSEX STREET, STRAND
1914

THE LINDSEY PRESS

BX
9869
D35
G3
1914

PRINTED BY ELSOM AND CO.
MARKET PLACE, HULL

E 983
D 28 9

FOREWORD

THERE are doubtless a few errors in this story of Francis David; for the English sources are scanty and fragmentary and sometimes conflict in details. A 'Life' by Alexis Jakab was published in the Hungarian language in 1879, on the three hundredth anniversary of David's death; but it is a sealed book to most of us, and little seems to have strayed out from it into other languages. It is said to be written with 'great insight and acumen.'

By far the most helpful sources at my own command have been manuscript letters written by Professor George Boros, the chief Secretary of the Hungarian Unitarian Churches and Dean of the Theological College in Kolozsvár. There could hardly be higher authority. The longest of these letters, nearly fifty pages of foolscap, was written in 1891 or 1892 to Professor Joseph Henry Allen, of Cambridge, who drew from it details for the short sketch of David in his

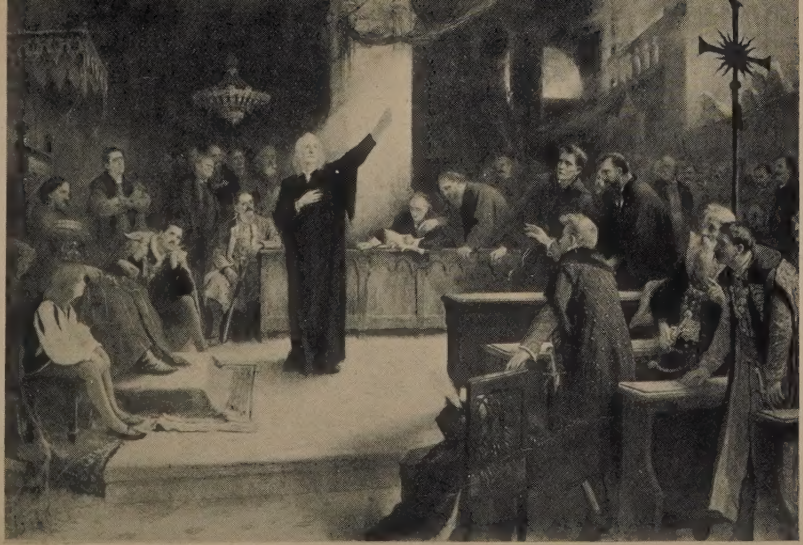
9227

'Unitarianism since the Reformation,' and who then deposited it, much of it unused, in the Divinity School Library of Harvard University. My account of the Trial of David comes mainly from this manuscript; and I doubt if the story has ever been printed in English before. The other letters referred to were kindly written by Dr. Boros in answer to questions of mine —some of them so recently that I have been able in this English edition of the story to correct several errors made in earlier forms of it brought out in America.

Another aid has been a pamphlet describing the great Torda painting, which the Budapest publisher of the picture was so courteous as to have translated from the Hungarian for my use. The Picture, of which a much reduced copy is here given, is a very handsome reproduction, measuring 48 by 36 inches. Copies of this large photogravure may be obtained through the Book-room at Essex Hall, carriage free, price thirty shillings.

To the sketch of Francis David, I have added a brief paper on 'Our Waldenses'; also a few Notes.

W. C. G.



Francis David Pleading for Liberty and Toleration in Religion at the Diet of Torda, in 1568.

FRANCIS DAVID

THE picture of Francis David pleading for Liberty and Toleration in Religion at the Diet of Torda, in 1568, was painted by the Hungarian artist, Körösföi-Kriesch Aladár, by order of the Town Council of Torda, when Hungary, in 1896, was preparing to celebrate its millennial. One thousand years before, Arpad and his Magyar warriors had made themselves lords of the land. In all that thousand years Torda found nothing to be so proud of by nineteenth-century estimate as her day-star proclamation of peace and goodwill in religion.

The incident which the picture commemorates lights the close of the great Reformation days somewhat as Luther's deed at the Diet of Worms lights their beginning. Luther at Worms, in 1521, voiced the rising protest against certain doctrines and practices of Rome. Francis David at Torda, in 1568, pleading for

liberty and toleration in religion, became the voice of a principle more fundamental than any doctrine whatever—more fundamental because it keeps open the road of the Soul for advance in whatever direction of doctrine or life the Spirit of God may lead; and a principle at that time considered so deadly a heresy that the few who dared stand for it were banned and hunted by Catholic and Protestant alike as emissaries of Satan. It is a principle with which the ideals of our Liberal Faith have long been identified, though not without lapses in practice—lapses that soon are regretted by all; and Francis David, one of its Reformation apostles, is a hero of ours who has not yet come to his own. No Luther or Calvin was he. We speak of Lutheranism and Calvinism, but no great reconstruction of faith bears David's name. Mainly by accidents of history, he even stands secluded behind Servetus and Socinus, the two well-known Unitarian figures of the Reformation, the latter of whom did give his name for two centuries to those who shared his beliefs. But in openness of mind, in loyalty to truth wherever it calls, in justice to opponents, in the tolerant

spirit, he was nobler than Luther, far nobler than Calvin, and nobler perhaps than either of his two fellow believers. No picture with greater fitness can hang on the walls of Unitarian meeting-houses to symbolize the contribution which the Liberal Faith has made to Christianity than this picture of David at Torda in 1568.

But if fully and frankly interpreted, the picture will recall a story of our shame as well as our glory. Not twelve years from that radiant day at Torda, David died in a dungeon a martyr to his advancing Unitarianism, died under sentence by a Catholic prince, but—this is the shame and surprise—pushed towards that martyrdom by the hands of Unitarians themselves, men who had halted just one step behind him in heresy. The pathos of the story of David lies in this fact. To dwell on the fact is, indeed, to stigmatize men, yet not so much men as their age. That glowing moment was but a prophetic *instant*. One moment the star Toleration gleamed out in the darkness—then vanished. The picture on our walls would be for warning as well as for inspiration. All the more give it place! If ever again among us theologic

or social issues rise on which good men differ, and ministers and people are tempted to part and churches to split, this picture with its double reminder might serve to keep both sides forbearing and tolerant ; both mindful that, however liberal we may seem to ourselves, there are ranges of truth not yet made one's own ; both loyal to the ideal of the Liberal Faith, which is the ideal not of Freedom alone, but of something much higher and harder—Freedom *with Fellowship*.

To find the folk who look to Francis David as their prophet somewhat as we look to Channing and Parker and Emerson, we must go to the little mountain-land called Transylvania, grottoed among the Carpathian Alps in the extreme south-eastern corner of Hungary. Just over those Alps lies the northernmost of the Balkan Provinces, so long in the grip of the Turk. This is the home of the Szeklers, of whose four hundred and fifty thousand seventy or eighty thousand are our fellow Unitarians. There are about a hundred and twenty churches of them with pastors, and some fifty or more little folds that are

shepherdless. They make the oldest group of Unitarians in Christendom. John Calvin had been in his thin-peopled heaven but three or four years when they came to birth as a Church. 'Our Waldenses,' some one has called them, because a humble folk, a mountain folk, and a martyr folk, who from their founder David's time wellnigh to our own have suffered persecution for their faith. This relic Church, hidden in space and in time, and almost forgotten by Christendom, was rediscovered by western Europe only about a hundred years ago. Such a mite of a relic it is, such a tiny bit of the true Cross, and so oddly different from anything that we are apt to think of as 'Unitarian.' In number, not four-tenths of one per cent of Hungary's population; in race, ~~cousins to~~ cousins Magyar, to Finn, and to Turk; in occupation, farmers and miners; in origin, old as the Reformation; in experience, akin to martyrs and Jews; in piety, wont to attend public worship every morning before going to the field from the villages, and twice on a Sunday; in church government, presbyterian, yet with a bishop. The mind of an easy-going Boston or London-born Unitarian finds it

hard to realize all this as genuine 'Unitarian.' But these are the sturdy, primitive stock; it is *we* who are variations.

The little that we know about Francis David reveals him as one of the most fearless and tireless truth-seekers of that tumultuously truth-seeking age. By birth, of course, Roman Catholic, he became, first, Lutheran, then Calvinist, then Unitarian, then more radical Unitarian. Five successive positions in thought, the last of which cost him his life. No other of the early Reformers proceeded so far and so logically outward and onward from Rome. David's personal evolution of faith is an epitome of the whole Reformation. His story in brief is told here.

The movement that we call 'the Reformation' soon penetrated from Germany into Hungary, coming in with traders, and with students returning from German universities. There had long been a 'Saxon' element in the population of upper Hungary and Transylvania, and the Roman Catholicism there was of a loose and liberal kind; so that many minds were ready to welcome the new teaching. The largest city, Kolozsvár, declared for it as early as

1540. Shortly before Luther's death in 1546, the Transylvanian Lutheran Church was organized ; soon it was legalized ; and by 1552, spite of all the Catholics could do to prevent, it was accorded full rights with the Catholic Church, and elected a bishop of its own.

About this time David (the name contracted from Davidis, i.e., Davidson) appears on the scene. A somewhat Galilean silence, longer than Jesus' thirty years, seems to brood over his early life. He was born in Transylvania's capital, Kolozsvár, probably in 1510, the son of a shoemaker. One of the early nicknames for his Unitarian followers in after-time was *sutores*, 'the cobblers,' which may indicate that the son at some time in his life practised his father's trade. However lowly in station, his parents were probably thoughtful, and he a bright child, or they would hardly have dedicated him in his youth, as we are told that they did, to the Catholic priesthood. The Franciscans had schools in Kolozsvár, and the boy owed his first education as well as his first name to the Saint. Later he was sent from home to the bishop's seat for studies in divinity.

There he so distinguished himself that he was retained as school and parish assistant. But inward fires were burning. He longed for a university; and the fame, perhaps the very peril, theologically considered, of Protestant Wittenberg, Luther's own city, attracted him. Many Catholic students were braving that peril—why should not he? At last, when thirty-five years old, his desire was fulfilled. Under the patronage of two liberal priests he found his way into Saxony, and to the training that his talents seemed to demand.

By this time the Reformation was well under way. If he reached Wittenberg in 1545, he saw and heard Luther himself, who died the next year. Melanchthon was still teaching and writing there. Calvin, but one year older than David, was already head of both Church and State in Geneva, where, after eight years more, Servetus at his bidding would be burning at the stake. Francis I of France and Henry VIII of England died when David was half through his courses; and in the year he went home, England, under her new boy-king, was turning the leaves of her first English and Protestant Prayer-book. In 1545 the

Council of Trent was assembling ; and the Jesuits were starting forth on their ardent career ; and the first war of the many to be waged between Catholic and Protestant was about to begin. So the Reformation was indeed under way—with the hundred years of horror, its awful cost, unguessed ahead. But ignorance being bliss, ' bliss was it in that dawn to be alive ! '

David may have dreamt of reforms, but nothing yet of perils. Scant record remains of his travels and studies in Germany ; but after four years he came home with enough of the old faith still in his heart to take charge of Catholic schools and to serve at the altar as priest. It was his chrysalis stage. He belonged to a group of ecclesiastics in whom ' modernist ' views were rapidly ripening towards heresy. When Bornemissza, the newly appointed Catholic bishop, called his clergy together to take measures against the further spread of innovations in religion, this group joined in a bold declaration that, while they wished to remain in the Roman communion, they could no longer acknowledge any authority but the teaching of Jesus, to whom they returned. The bishop tried to silence the

upstarts, and at that, throwing off their robes and their allegiance, they openly allied themselves with the Lutherans. A deed typical of the time. David, already known as an orator, had himself written the declaration of independence, and was widely recognized as leader of the progressives. Three cities at once competed to win the new convert for their minister. Accepting the call of his native city, Kolozsvár, he served for a time as its director of schools and as preacher. But promotion was near. Wiener, the first Lutheran bishop, who had been chosen by the German party in the Church, soon died, and David, chosen by the Magyar (Hungarian) party, became his successor—thus establishing the first Hungarian Lutheran Church. All this by 1550 or 1557. He was now about forty-six years of age, and had taken his first step forth from Rome.

Currents of doctrine ran swiftly in those days. Already Lutheran beliefs in Transylvania were yielding to Calvin's influence. David at first, of course, defended the Lutheran view of the Eucharist—that the Christ was really, though mystically, present in the bread and wine of the sacra-

ment ; but more and more deeply to him, as to Melanchthon, the Calvinist view appealed—that the Supper was but a symbol, and the Christ present only in the hearts of the communicants—as he listened to the arguments of its eager advocates. An honest man, he quickly resigned his bishopric therefore, pleading, again like Melanchthon, for mild words and mutual forbearance, and fondly hoping that a tolerant spirit would gradually bring minds together on Calvinist ground. 'We do not wish,' he writes, 'to disturb anyone's conscience, but to harmonize consciences that are disturbed.' For a little while there was a 'union' between the two parties ; but patriotism and intolerance on both sides soon shattered the dream. It hurt David deeply. As if with a premonition of what this spirit would some time cost him, he wrote : 'It is in vain to threaten me ; if it be God's will, I am ready to endure exile or any fate rather than deny truth I have come to see. Whatever happens to me, truth will come out victor.' Not yet, however, was fate ready to act. The tide was setting strongly towards Calvinism ; and when the 'Saxons' actu-

ally disfellowshipped their rivals, Melius and David had nothing to do but organize a separate church, Magyar in members and Calvinist in faith. Accordingly they drew up a creed, the first creed formulated in the Magyar language ; their Church was legalized by the Diet ; and Francis David, still considered the real head of the Church, again became bishop—now a Calvinist bishop. Eight years more had passed ; it was 1564.

The Calvinist triumph in its turn soon passed into exclusion. Melius influenced the Diet to expel Roman Catholic priests from the land. Adherents of the Greek Church were also dismissed. Such high-handed intolerance was thoroughly repugnant to David. While zealous for evangelical truth, his heart throbbed with evangelical love. And love quickened vision. The narrow limits of salvation provided by Calvin's 'Institutes,' and especially the terrible dogma of predestination, waked in him grave doubts of the whole system of which this was so vital a part. Again he began to hear the truth-voices within, which bade him go forward.

About this time a new doctrine, simple

but strange, was quietly finding its way into Transylvania from Poland, brought by the Italian court physician, Blandrata. Conviction and zeal had made Blandrata's flight, first out of Italy, and then out of Calvin's Geneva, expedient; and at that time the one safe sanctuary in Europe for fugitives of religion was Poland. There the physician won repute and successfully sowed the seeds of his faith, until he was invited to Transylvania by the Queen-mother Isabella and her son, young Prince Sigismund. They liked well the keen-thinking, smooth-speaking man, and did not fear his belief. It was the faith, or the unfaith, allied to the worst error of Jew and of Turk, that God was not three-fold in nature and person, but One; but it claimed solid basis in Scripture, wherein all Christian doctrines had to find bases at that time, and was more rational in its ideas, more ethical in its emphases, and far more tolerant in its spirit, than either of the three systems that David thus far had known. It took but a short time for the physician to recognize David's liberal tendencies and his talent for popular leadership; and the thought could hardly help coming,

'Once converted, what a leader for my reform he would make!'

Soon, under his quiet influence, David, already restless in Calvinism, began to see new lights in old texts. His mind moved rapidly forward. 'Did the Bible assert the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost?' If it did, David could not find the passages. One day—it was now 1566—in a class at the College he heard one of his professors explaining the doctrine of God in the usual trinitarian way—God should be worshipped as one in essence, three in persons. David interrupted: 'God is spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit.' That interruption, so tense was the time, was enough. The perilous question opened wide. Hot discussion concerning the doctrine of the Trinity broke out among the professors; and, as usual, David found himself not only in the party of advance but swept to its front. He was soon maintaining that the doctrine of the Trinity was nowhere to be found in the Scripture, that it came from the scholastics. Again, therefore, the bishopric was laid down, his third faith being outgrown.

Melius, his old ally, was furious. A war

of texts and invective began. It was characteristic of the people and the time that they liked to debate their religious differences in public tournaments, with appointed champions for each side and formal verdicts; and two or three such debates were speedily held to argue the *pro* and the *con* of this new doctrine. In all religious controversies of that day Bible-texts were the stones of the slingers, and David, true to his name, was a mighty man in their use. 'He seemed to have both Old and New Testaments at his finger ends. It was his way to explain Scripture by Scripture, and overwhelm an opponent with a host of texts. He could harangue with equal ease and effect in the German and Magyar tongues, and in disputations with Calvinists and Lutherans before the nobility no one could stand against him.' So wrote a Jesuit father of the time, reporting to his Superior. But so big were the odds, so great the host of Philistines, that it might have gone hardly with David, had not the young Prince of Transylvania, the open-minded and tolerant John Sigismund, invited him to his royal residence at Gyulafehérvár to become his court

preacher—an invitation doubtless due to Biandrata. Here at the court he could boldly try out his doctrine as fast as it opened in his mind. And here the next year (1567) came his great opportunity.

A new challenge arrived from the Trinitarian side, but couched in such ominous terms, and appointing so dangerous a place for the meeting, that the Unitarian party declined it; offering, however, to meet their opponents at Torda, promising safe-conduct and assistance, and invoking an open mind, a brotherly heart, weapons of the spirit, and the shield of the love of God. The Prince finally settled the matter by bidding them meet at his own palace; and there the debate was held before him and his court. All Transylvania was now listening. The proceedings began with a prayer offered by Francis David to the Father of Light and of Christ, and another prayer by a Trinitarian. Four judges and four scribes were appointed; there were five disputants to a side, David and Biandrata the leaders on one side, Melius the leader on the other. The discussion was conducted in Latin, and it lasted ten days. It was the first great public debate

on Unitarianism. At the end of the ten days the Unitarians had won a complete victory. The Prince favoured the doctrine, and many of the nobles went home its converts.

When the news of the victory reached Kolozsvár, the streets surged with exultant crowds. They halted the carriage that was bringing David home—the man who had twice been their bishop—made him mount a large stone in the street, and begin at once to teach the new faith ; and then, breaking into shouts, bore him off on their shoulders to the Church of St. Mark, there to continue the preaching. That round pulpit-stone is still kept as a sacred relic by the Unitarians of Kolozsvár. 'This day,' we are told, 'the whole people of Kolozsvár became Unitarian.' [2]

The next step was into print, and it was soon taken : David's first Unitarian publications appeared, one in Latin for scholars, two in Hungarian for the people. The year 1567 dates the open propaganda. As the news spread over the land, great was the upstir. Could this, indeed, be Bible truth ? And might men safely profess it ? Would it be tolerated by law ? Lutheranism had

been legalized ; Calvinism had been legalized ; would this belief—everywhere in Christendom, save by a few thinkers in Poland, regarded as atheism—would this be legalized, too ? Only the National Diet could decide. And so we have reached the moment represented in our picture. The Diet assembled at Torda on the sixth of January, 1568.

The artist has idealized the scene a little, nor could he well do otherwise. For the place of the meeting he has chosen a setting that suggests the old Mother-Church, its shadows shot through by the rising sun of Reformation. No portrait, perhaps no description, of David exists. At such a moment his face may well have shone, as we see it, with light from within as well as by rays from without ; but at fifty-eight years of age he could hardly have been the aged and saintly ascetic to whom the painter has given the beautiful countenance. Many or all of the prominent figures are historical. On the dais at the left sits Prince Sigismund, still officially Lutheran, but already much inclined to his preacher's new doctrine. He sits between his young

nephews, the Bathory brothers, of Catholic faith, who in turn are to occupy his throne after his death. That gentle-faced boy on his right is the one who will be sending our white-haired pleader to prison before very long. Behind these stands the court physician, Blandrata, his arms folded, and looking solidly satisfied. In the dim beyond him is a group of Lutheran clergy, among them the venerable Alesius, once royal chaplain. The man at the end of the table behind David is the Chancellor Csaky. The one turning the leaves of a book is Gaspard Heltai, the translator of the Bible into Hungarian, and the book, of course, is the Bible—the white heart of the Diet; for the whole Reformation centres around the Bible, and the artist properly gives it the high light in his picture. Heltai and one of David's ministers are verifying the texts on which David is basing his argument. Standing between the benches on the right is a Catholic priest, and by his side the Calvinist Melius —hot enough foes to each other, but side by side as regards David; they appear in the picture only by artist's privilege to typify historic forces of the time, though

neither was really present. Behind them are the Szekler and Magyar aristocracy, and, in front on the benches, the higher Estates, most of them Calvinist; but we see some of the latter, Gaspard Békes among them—he who would have been the Prince's Unitarian successor instead of the Catholic Bathory, had the Prince had his way—leaping to their feet with enthusiasm as the eloquent orator pleads for the widening of liberty and toleration in religion. The moment is apparently the close and climax of the discussion. All in the picture are listening intently, every eye fastened upon David's face.

The Edict won by his eloquence is said to have passed the Diet by unanimous vote. Translated, it reads: 'His Royal Highness, as in former Diets, so in this now present, confirms that ministers of the Gospel may everywhere preach and explain it, each according to his own understanding; and the community may accept or reject the teaching as it thinks good. No force may be used to compel acceptance against conviction. Congregations are allowed to have each the preacher it wishes. Preachers shall not be molested, nor anyone perse-

cuted, on account of religion; no one is permitted to remove from office, or to imprison, anyone because of his teaching. Faith being the gift of God, which comes by hearing, and the hearing through the Word of God.' What can sound stronger, broader, nobler than that?

Yet to claim for this Edict the full glory of its words would be to idealize it somewhat as the painter idealizes the face of David; for, to judge by what followed, what was *meant*, however it sounds, was not liberty absolute, not toleration complete, but only equal liberty for the four prominent faiths up to that time developed in Transylvania—Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and now the new faith, unchristened as yet, of those professing 3
One God. These four were henceforth to be the 'religions received' in Transylvania. But even this was a most wonderful stretch of toleration for those days; probably the widest known in Christian history up to that time; and so wide that in most Christian lands, whether Catholic or Protestant, its like was no more than dreamed of for generations to come. When we remember what the Inquisition was doing in

4 the Netherlands in this very year, 1568; and that St. Bartholomew's Massacre in France was only four years away; and that Protestant leaders, German, French, Swiss, all but the Italian refugees, chorused approval of Calvin for burning Servetus—even the mild Melanchthon writing, 'I entirely assent; the Church in all generations will owe you a debt of gratitude'; and that Shakespeare may have watched heretics burning or drowning in England; and that fifty years after Shakespeare's death English prisons were crowded with Quakers and Baptists;—when we remember these things, whatever rebate in praise may be needed, glory enough belongs to Transylvania and Torda and Prince Sigismund for their Edict of Toleration in 1568.

In its own kind the Edict preceded by four years the somewhat similar Declaration of Cracow (1572), giving Protestants, including Unitarians, equal rights with Catholics in Poland; by five years the Polish 'Pax Dissidentium' (1573); by six years the first Polish Unitarian Confession of Faith (1574), which condemned all temporal punishment and persecution of dissidents; and by thirty-seven years the

famous Socinian Catechism of Rakow, of which 'the mainspring is the principle of liberty in religion.' Faustus Socinus, who had all but completed this catechism at his death in 1604, has been called 'the father of modern toleration'; and perhaps deservedly called so, because his influence so widely and so thoroughly identified Socinianism with that principle that the two things became known and hated as one. But in toleration as in theology Faustus was heir to his uncle, the other Socinus; and, besides Laelius Socinus, Castellio and Ochino and Acontio and David were all its apostles earlier than he. In 1568, the year of the Edict of Torda, Faustus was foreign secretary at the court of the Grand Duke Cosimo in Florence, his theological career yet to begin; he did not see Poland till after he had taken part in the preliminaries to the trial of David eleven years later, nor reach fame and influence there till considerably later than that. It may well be that his experience in that trial, and his regret at its outcome, and the elaborate *apologia* he wrote to relieve himself from responsibility for it, had somewhat to do with the strong stamp

of toleration that he impressed on his system. If this were so, David could hardly have advanced his cause better than by his death in the prison.

As for David himself, he seems to have been as broad and noble in spirit as the Edict would have been, had it meant all it said. Even Calvinist historians bear witness to his patience and moderation in controversy. Many things indicate that he was as truly David the peacemaker, David the apostle of toleration, as he was David the progressive in thought. He appears to have passed entirely beyond the idea of employing force to serve the cause of truth. To quote from words addressed to the Prince in one of his works: 'We desire not only that our persecutors go unpunished, but that they be honoured and rewarded; allowed to write and to teach against us, to condemn us, to do whatever they feel disposed against us.' That phrase, 'faith being the gift of God,' was a favourite quotation with him, and suggests the probable plane and scope of his high argument. We can hardly go far wrong if we take the words of the Edict as giving the gist of his plea that day. The

vote shows the impression it made; and most of the Diet, it is said, went home converts to David's now 'received' faith.

To his now 'received,' but as yet all unorganized, faith. Was David the Luther to organize it? His own heart must have anxiously asked itself that question. Whatever it answered, he certainly had the prophet's consciousness. He believed that an apocalyptic 'time of fulfilment' was at hand, and he felt himself a chosen instrument in the hand of God. The Reformation, he used to say, had been until now in outward things, working to destroy the walls of the corrupt Babylon, but now it had reached the heart of the questions of faith, when every man, even the simplest, might see with his own eyes the truth and acknowledge it openly. The next three years were stirring years for David and for Transylvania. The reform quickened almost to revolution. Within a few months over four hundred ministers had professed it, and David and his colleagues had sent forth twelve publications, some in Latin, some in Hungarian, to explain and defend it—eight of these written by David himself.

And now for the third time he was made bishop: Lutheran, Calvinist, Unitarian bishop! Was ever another such bishop as he?

And what was the system of doctrine so winsome? That God is not three-fold, but One; that Jesus was the man in whom human and divine were blended as in no man before or since, one who had been specially endowed and sent by God to begin a new spiritual creation on earth—a mission promised beforehand by Old Testament prophets; and who, having worthily finished the work given him to do, had been raised by God to the glory of his right hand in heaven, there to abide, ever living and working, leading men's hearts to the new life by which they too can attain divine glory. The merits of Jesus consisted not in his saving death, but in his saving life. It was in vain to seek salvation in outer things: true faith in God the Father, and life according to the example and teaching of Jesus, were sufficient for happiness here and hereafter. The faith and the love are the two essentials—nothing besides. Man is the birthright heir of the Kingdom of God, and the common people can enter

equally with the highest into the heritage. Organization, ceremonies, practices of the Churches, were of little account at the best; and those of the Church that had been, and that had so long shut out the people from their spiritual birthright, were now to give way. God, through his holy spirit within men, was finishing the work of his new creation. The period of wandering was past, the time of fulfilment had come. And the promise, guarantee, and charter of all this is the Will of God revealed in the Word of God, the Holy Scripture. This was the 6
simple system, rock-based on the Bible, naïvely mechanical in its rationalism, mystical in nothing, democratic and ethical in its appeal, exalting things of character and things of the soul, with which, suddenly, and for a little time at least, David won the hearts of his countrymen.

But the controversy went bitterly on; and in October of the year after the Edict another great theological tournament was held, this time in Hungary, and in the vernacular, with nine disputants on each side. On the sixth day the Prince called it off: 'We have tried,' he said, 'to care not only for the bodies of our people, but

for their souls, to the end that they may increase in truth and free themselves from the wiles of the Anti-Christ. We have also wished to prove the falsity of the name by which we are called in foreign lands, as if we were Turks. But we see that the party opposed to us is only evading reply. You may come freely, without hindrance or hurt, to our country, whenever you will, to dispute: our preacher shall always be ready to meet you. But now, since you are but going around truth and giving no direct answers to the question in hand, we close the discussion, that we may go home and attend to other cares of the country.'

The good Prince, whether good umpire or not, was still a young man, not quite thirty years old; a chivalric figure, brave, generous, kind-hearted, broad-minded, accomplished; seen only in glimpses of history, but whenever seen, seen *edelweiss*. He, too, is a hero of ours who has never yet come to his own. Though he lived long enough to achieve little else, he built himself an enduring, if little known, monument in his Edict of Toleration—a monument befitting the one Unitarian whom history shows on even a minor throne of

Europe. As if to make liberty and toleration impregnable in his land, he took pains, a few months before his death, now near at hand, to grant specific charters to the 'four religions' allowed. 'Had he only lived to be fifty,' sighs the historian, 'his new Church might have grown strong and unshakable!' It was not to be; he died in 1571. In every land of the Reformation the success or the failure of the reform turned much on the disposition and belief of the political ruler. As Luther had his Saxon Elector to help him, as England waited for signal from Henry VIII, so David had had his Prince Sigismund.

With the death of the Prince, everything changed. The glory of Unitarianism passed almost in the hour of its dawn. The throne went first to the elder nephew seen in our picture, a liberal Catholic; and four years later to the younger, an illiberal Catholic, who soon invited the Jesuits into the land. As they came in, good days went out for Unitarians. David, of course, was no longer court preacher; the printing-press given by Sigismund was taken away; freedom to publish was greatly limited; and a decree prohibited Unitarians from

holding synods except in Kolozsvár and Torda. For a while the people clung to their faith. Even when repression became oppression, not a few remained faithful. But with many it had been but a skin-deep conversion, as sweeping conversions are apt to be, and after a generation or two the larger part were recalled, not only from Unitarianism, but back to the original faith of their fathers. Another case of the people following their political rulers in their religion. For almost three centuries Unitarianism was an afflicted faith in the home of its birth.

To finish the story of David. A certain John Sommer, a bold thinker like David, had come to Kolozsvár to teach in the College; and the two brother-minds pushed their way onward together. The Unitarians of Transylvania, like their more learned brethren in Poland, while no longer holding Christ to be God, were accustomed to address him in prayer—somewhat as Catholics 'worship' the virgin. A year or so after the friendly Prince died, David and Sommer reached the conclusion that such invocation of Christ had no warrant

in Scripture. But Scripture set the horizon to truth; and, since to discern truth in the Scripture brought obligation to David's conscience to publish it, he began in his sermons to preach the radicalism that prayer should be addressed solely to God, never to Christ. This was his new and his final position, the fifth. Whether important or not, the position certainly seems logical. But it made Unitarianism appear so concrete and 'Judaizing' that it became more offensive than ever. Blandrata, who had had so much to do with the swift dawn of the faith and the fame of its prophet—Blandrata had once inclined to this same logic himself. But that was in safer time; now he called it 'innovation,' and denounced it. David and his friends would fain have defended the position; but liberty to print was forbidden them. At a Diet in 1573 it was decreed that 'innovators,' that is, those who went beyond the legalized doctrines, should be excommunicated. Plainly the famous Edict of five years before had rims! But *did* withholding invocation from Christ constitute 'innovation in doctrine'? That was open to doubt; so the preacher kept on with

his preaching. Then Blandrata tried to undermine his support within the Kolozsvár congregation. But this was a difficult matter, the people so loved their irreproachable bishop; and he was a power in the land. Five years went by in ill-smothered dissension. David was now growing old. The gentle-faced boy of our picture, the Jesuit-lover, had by this time come to the throne, and was growing impatient. Something must be done, and at once, or, as the courtier physician saw, the whole *status quo* was in danger—to say nothing of his own favour at court and its possible future.

But he would first try conversion. Faustus Socinus, now in mid-life and devoting himself to theology, was at this time living and holding Christologic debates in Switzerland. Blandrata called him to his aid, quartering him several months in David's own house and paying the board-bill. Month in and month out the two disputed, at the end each finding in the New Testament texts just about what he found there when he began. This failing, Blandrata next threatened: 'Change your opinion you must, or the Diet shall bring

condemnation and sentence.' David offered to refer the question to a committee of ministers. The committee met, and circumspectly advised that it be referred to a synod ; and this was agreed to. Blandrata soon urged, however, that both parties should first submit statements in writing to the Polish Unitarians, supposedly wiser in Scripture than themselves, and that, with their opinion in hand, the synod should give its decision ; the preacher meanwhile to hold his peace on the point in dispute. David, already a sick man, agreed also to this, prepared his brief, and handing a copy to Socinus, said : 'Behold, my Faustus, the writing is here ; now answer it squarely without evasion, from the clear words of God.' Socinus and Biandrata together prepared theirs ; and the two documents went northwards to Poland. David waited.

Probably the Jesuits were pushing the Prince, the Prince pushing the physician ; for suddenly—no word yet come from Poland—a synod was called, the summons containing plain hint that ministers must vote with Blandrata or lose their positions. Some, perhaps many, sincerely differed

from David, and this intimation settled the business for others; so the desired resolutions were secured. Among other charges was one that David had said, as doubtless he had, that to invoke Christ was the same as invoking dead saints. This word was too much for Prince Bathory, who resolved to finish the matter forthwith, and entrusted it to Blandrata. 'Henceforth we are to be enemies!' was the message Blandrata sent to the preacher, and orders were dispatched to the mayor of Kolozsvár to put him under arrest. David's son-in-law, Trauzner by name, happened to be the secretary of the city, and saw the order. With sad heart he went to tell David. He found him sick in bed, with Socinus at the bedside talking with him as a friend. And the young man's wrath broke loose. David stopped him: 'This is what I have been expecting; but now'—turning to Socinus—'leave my house, and finish the work you have begun!' It was Saturday 7 and the mayor had not yet taken action. One Sunday of freedom remained. Trauzner urged David, sick as he was, to preach once more to his people, tell all that had happened, and that he was to be put in

prison. David hesitated, and yielded, and preached. One prediction has been remembered from this last sermon of his: 'Whatever the world may say now, the time will come when all men will know that God is but One.' The next day the Town Council sent a deputation to the palace, entreating suspension of sentence, the nobles offering to become security for their beloved bishop. But the Prince had heard of that sermon, and ordered him under still stricter guard until the trial should take place.

Again a synod assembled at Torda. It was the end of April, 1579. Kolozsvár sent ten deputies to it, and with them was carried David, their bishop, sick, and a prisoner. His people had not given up hope. Petitions, presents, noblemen went to the Prince. The stronger ministers and leaders all over the country showed that their sympathies were really with David. Nothing availed: Prince and physician were obdurate. David sent word to his friends: 'Let no tumult be made in my behalf. I am ready to bear anything for the truth I confess. If anyone will show me something more correct out of the Scriptures,

I am ready to give up my opinions.' At the last moment the Prince, yielding a little to the general grief and exasperation, decided to postpone the sessions to June; meanwhile he committed David to the tender mercies of Blandrata, who, increasing his guard, dragged him back to Kolozsvár, and allowed only his daughter and doctor to see him during the interval. When June came, he could hardly move hand or foot, and, as they bore him again from his home to the carriage, his last words were, 'Good-bye, ye will see me no more.'

The trial began, this time in the town where the Prince himself lived. The Chancellor explained that imprisonment was necessary, because David insisted on preaching forbidden doctrines. Blandrata followed: Years ago, he said, he had warned David to avoid innovations—now he, Blandrata, must defend the Church. David wished to reply in person, but the Prince silenced him: 'You have already spoken blasphemy enough!' The son-in-law was bidden to act as spokesman in his behalf. 'Is it true,' asked the Prince, 'that you said in your sermons that Christ is not to

be worshipped?' 'It is true. I have preached that worship which is not commanded by the Word of God cannot be pleasing to him; the worship of Christ is nowhere commanded in Scripture; therefore it cannot please God.' Blandrata: 'Yes, you have become Judaizers!' 'Sir, Doctor, you also were of the same opinion a few years ago.' Blandrata protested: Never had he held the opinion; or, if ever by chance he had happened to speak in such way, here and now he retracted his words—and he recommended David to do likewise. 'Never will he do that!' cried Trauzner, indignantly; 'only a *straw* man retracts, if not convinced, the words he has spoken.' That night in his prison David again counselled his friends not to stir up excitement over his case, but to let come what might: 'The world would yet understand that none but God should be worshipped.'

The next morning by six the trial was on again. David himself was willing to wait, as Blandrata first wished, for the answer from Poland. But the fiery young son-in-law objected: 'The Hungarian churches are free, and responsible only to

their own nobility, not to another land's.' David was then taken out of the council-room, and the consultation and voting began. It lasted two hours. Blandrata, and twenty-five with him, repudiated David's 'innovation.' It is said that all the Unitarian noblemen, but that only one minister, stood on David's side. Last spoke the Prince and his Chancellor: 'It is blasphemy.' David was brought back to the room to receive sentence. Blandrata, approaching, gave him a Judas embrace, saying, 'Fear not—I shall ask pardon from the Prince for you.' The 8
ministers who came from Hungary—it is to be hoped, they alone, not the old comrades in the Transylvanian churches—demanded that the Prince punish David to serve as warning against 'innovations.' And the Prince pronounced sentence—'Imprisonment for life, or until further order.'

The old man was taken back to his cell in the town, kept there for three days, and then sent to the dungeon of the castle of Deva, a small hill-town in the south of the land. No relative, no friend, was allowed near him; only a servant, who made his

last days in the dungeon a little easier. In less than five months death released his brave spirit : November 15, 1579.

It is said that he wrote certain lines in Latin on the walls of his dungeon. Even if they be but the words that some reverent disciple wrote in his name, a few belong here. They begin :

Twice ten years I have loyally served my country,
And to my Prince my fidelity oft hath been proven.
Ask you my crime that the Fatherland hates so ?
This alone is it : One God, not three, I have worshipped.

And the lines close :

Nor lightning, nor cross, nor sword of the Pope, nor Death's visiblest face,
No power whatever, can stay the progress of Truth !
What I have felt I have written ; with faithful heart I have spoken :
After my death the dogmas of untruth shall fall !

David's sepulchre no man knoweth. Four years ago pilgrims from Hungary, Germany, England, America—sixty-two from America alone—gathered at little Deva, and climbed the hill to the ruined castle, to dedicate a stone and a tablet to his memory. Budapest, Kolozsvár, and Deva itself welcomed the pilgrims with

music, processions, addresses—Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, all taking part. On the stone are graven these words in Hungarian :

FOR HIS RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS, IN THIS CASTLE SUFFERED A MARTYR'S DEATH THE GREAT REFORMER, FRANCIS DAVID, THE FOUNDER OF THE HUNGARIAN UNITARIAN CHURCHES. IN 1910, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FOUR-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH, THIS TOKEN OF REMEMBRANCE WAS PLACED HERE BY THE CHIEF CONSISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN UNITARIAN CHURCHES, INHERITORS OF HIS SPIRIT.

In his memorial address the beloved Bishop Ferencz, present successor of David, said : 'To the spirit of Francis David, unfaltering and uncompromising in the search for truth, we dedicate this stone. This is the main source of our reverence for him—his spirit of dauntless truth-seeking ; this, and not any specific truth revealed by him and accepted by us. All such truths are likely to be surpassed by a future generation, even as we have ourselves transcended articles of faith that were an integral part of his teaching.'

Not his truth, but his quest ; not his faith, but his spirit ! There spoke the true inheritor of his spirit.

At the foot of the castle-crowned hill in Deva a chapel is to be built as his memorial. The plans already drawn are awaiting the twelve thousand dollars which it will cost. Torda has her great picture. Some day in Kolozsvár, his birthplace and the scene of his life-work, his statue should stand: to-day the traveller seeks it in vain. We, too, are inheritors of his spirit; and with his own countrymen, but in far greater measure than they, we have inherited the *fruits* of that spirit, the happy results of the principle for which he suffered and died. Should not the Unitarians of England and those of America join hands with those of his own land, to honour the reformer, the prophet, the hero, the martyr, who at Torda, in 1568, represented us all, and pleaded our cause in his high argument for liberty and toleration in religion?

'OUR WALDENSES'

WERE we to visit our Unitarian cousins in Transylvania, what would we find beside and behind a most generous welcome?

A legend, for one thing. Their own legend of origin, which the scholars will hardly allow to be history, has it that the Szeklers are descended from a squad of Attila's fifth-century Huns. After his defeat at Chalons in France (A.D. 451), one of Europe's history-shaping battles, a part of the horde, in the rush of retreat to the east, lost their way, it is said; one band veering northward to find a home by Russia's icy sea and become the Finns of to-day, another veering south-eastward to be stranded in the Carpathian mountains and become there our Szeklers. Four centuries later—and here at least we reach history-land—another race of Huns, streaming out from their haunts by the Volga, flowed into the great Danubian plain and

on over Germany, Flanders, France to the sea, and then, turning back, settled down by the bend of the Danube and gave the land the name of Hungary, by which we still know it. These were the proud Magyars, and this the conquest whose thousandth anniversary was celebrated with great rejoicings in 1896. One thing, it is thought, is made certain by language—that the Finns, the Szeklers, the Magyars, are three cousin-races, all of Turanian stock, aliens in Aryan Europe. The last two have blended now as 'Hungarians,' and both are proud of the name.

Five or six turbulent centuries passed, and after the Magyars came still a fourth cousin-race from the east, the Turks, the last of the great waves of Asian invasion. They captured Constantinople in 1453, and were at the height of their power in Europe during the Reformation period. When Francis David, the Unitarian founder, was a boy of sixteen, a terrible slaughtering victory made them masters of a large part of Hungary, with Budapest as the capital. There they waited for a hundred and sixty years, always watching to leap again and leap farther, and keeping

Germany ever alertly on guard. And it was their own kin, the Christianized Magyars, who became the living barrier of heroes that held back from Europe the menace of Mohammedanism. The failure to capture Vienna in the siege of 1683 was the beginning of the end of the Turkish dominion in Europe—that slow end which we, in turn, are watching to-day. Through all these years little Transylvania, fortressed in her mountains, preserved partial independence under princes of her own, sometimes fighting the Turks, sometimes on good terms with them, sometimes even protected by them against Roman Catholic fellow Christians. Always a brave race of patriots, in the fierce old times the Szeklers were the 'embattled farmers' and 'minute men' of the borders, sturdy and trusted defenders of the mountain-passes; and the land is still sprinkled with fortress-churches, 'village Kremlins,' in which the women took turn with the men when a siege was in process, while the children kept on at their lessons in shot-proof schoolrooms chambered out of the walls!

The story of the beginnings of Unitarianism in Transylvania has been told in the story of David. When he died, his Church was the leading Church of the land; but it was speedily shorn of that rank, and outside, in Hungary proper, soon lost its existence. Persecution set in, not in the cruel old-time forms of banishment, prison and stake, but in forms of steady repression. Liberty to print, to proselyte, to hold synods, was limited. Books that were written had to circulate in manuscript, if at all; schools were closed, churches were taken from them—sixty-two at one swoop ——and given to Calvinists and Catholics; all this even while the Turks, their semi-protectors, were the overlords of the land. When the Turks were expelled towards the end of the seventeenth century, and Austrian Hapsburgs and Jesuits came to full power, the blight and the trampling grew even worse. The eighteenth century was one chronic suppression of rights. Extreme circumspection was necessary to avoid trouble with the Government. The holding of public office was forbidden, a stigma that cost the little body many of its better-off families. Unitarians were afraid

to count David as one of their bishops, and his name almost faded from speech. Only the humble band of Szekler farmers stood firm. That the faith survived at all seems a miracle. Three things account for it: the old charter of Sigismund, which had expressly organized Unitarianism as one of the 'four received religions'; the close weave of the church-organization; and the sturdy fibre of Szekler nature.

The French Revolution's wide-circling upheavals brought the first relief; and the Kossuth Revolution of 1848, after frightful convulsions, brought more. Unitarianism, authorized before only in Transylvania, was made legal throughout Hungary. A slow Renaissance set in. Old liberties were restored; schools, churches, publications gradually revived. Friendly relations with fellow Unitarians in England and America were established, and Channing and Martineau became *their* prophets also. Finally in 1895, but not until then, less than twenty years ago, the last bar was removed and religion became free for all in Austria-Hungary.

Northward in Poland, where Unitarianism had also a bright beginning and, in a

degree, constitutional rights, but where it secured no charter protection, and where it was more the faith of a cultured and propertied class whose very station invited attack, the full tragedy fell. The Jesuits stamped it out ruthlessly, and by 1660 the banished Unitarians were wandering, everywhere unwelcomed fugitives, over the face of Protestant Europe.

Now for a glimpse of our Szekler brethren themselves, and of their Church as we find it to-day.

'Our Waldenses,' we called them above, and the name fits them well because it tells in one word that they are a mountain people, a tiny people, a humble people, a virtuous people, as well as through history a martyr people. To repeat just a word or two: The two or three loftiest-lying counties of Transylvania make the land which to most of the Szeklers is home. Of their four hundred and fifty thousand, some seventy or eighty thousand are of Unitarian faith; and these have to-day about a hundred and twenty churches with ministers, besides some fifty little folds too small for separate pastors. They are a fine-

looking people, of gentle and serious face ; 'a peasant aristocracy' of freemen, strikingly superior to the ordinary Hungarian peasants, who up to 1785 were serfs attached to the soil. The men wear broidered trousers tucked into high-top boots, coats or waistcoats buttoned to the chin, and low black hats ; the women wear dark kerchiefs, broidered jackets over white waists, skirts voluminously belled out, and top-boots like the men. They are almost all either farmers or miners, with very few men of means among them. The usual home is a white stone cottage, only one story high under the tiles or the thatch, with a picturesque steep-roofed barn looming behind. They are a temperate, kindly, hospitable folk—*so* hospitable that a big help of anything at table is called a 'Unitarian piece!'—and with a family life so warm and loving that even the hostile old chroniclers give them credit at least for morality. A Catholic priest of the seventeenth century writes to Venice, praising their virtue, and advising their repression because their good lives were a recommendation of their detestable doctrines and a standing reproach to the life of the Catholic

clergy. Education is highly valued among them, though from their poverty elementary schools have to suffice for the most. Three high schools or colleges, and a theological school, open their doors to the six or seven hundred more fortunate ones. Until of late each church had its own school attached. Many of these schools are now taken over by the State; but the little Unitarians are still carefully taught by their minister the principles and history of their faith, and made ready, by the time they are twelve or fourteen years old, to be confirmed as church members. So they grow up, like the Jews, proud of their martyr-story; and a disloyal Unitarian in Transylvania is rare.

The minister is a man of consequence. Two things are wisely required of him: he must own a Bible, and, if he marries, must marry a Unitarian girl! To fit him to be of best use to his farmer-flock he is trained at the divinity school in the higher agriculture and higher sanitation as well as the higher criticism. The churches usually own a few acres of land, or have a small endowment; and with a parsonage, a little farm, and an orchard, he and the

Unitarian girl are passing rich on £60 a year. The State fixes this as the 'minimum wage,' and, if necessary, makes up the deficit—an arrangement that costs independence, but saves the struggle which some of our churches in other lands know.

Every morning the pastor leads his people in a short service of worship before they go to the fields—the hour shifting from four to eight o'clock according to the season. Sunday morning is holy day; the afternoon, after the second service, is holiday; the evening may even bring dance and festivity. Outside, the old churches are picturesque in their simplicity; inside, they are bare. Organs are a nineteenth-century innovation, having been under ban until recently as lacking Scripture authority. The people usually sit on open benches, men and women on opposite sides of the church facing each other; between them an open space with the table on which the Lord's Supper is served to communicants standing around it in relays, first the men, then the women. Four times a year the Supper is celebrated, and every member who possibly can be is present. On Good Friday the story of the Passion is

sung 'to an old-world tune of weird beauty.' The choral hymns roll out in slow-moving surges of sound. The sermons are usually preached without manuscript, and are practical rather than doctrinal. Attack on other people's belief is forbidden by a wise rule of the Church.

The church government is of the Presbyterian order. Every congregation elects its own ruling elders or 'inner men,' and belongs to a circuit, of which there are nine in the land, each having its council, curators, and a visiting dean, who once a year goes the round of his charge to inspect the material and spiritual conditions. Above these comes the Central Consistory and Synod of some two hundred members, largely laymen—a rather close corporation; and over all this a bishop. When a society needs a new minister, its elders, relying on hearsay rather than hearing, select three candidates, from whom the people designate one; the three names are then submitted to the bishop, who usually, but not always, appoints the one whom the people desire. The appointee is obliged to accept the appointment! Should the people tire of their minister and dismiss

him, they will have nothing to say about his successor, the choice in this case resting wholly with the bishop—a contrivance that probably tends to lessen contention, if it does not increase the content. As just said, to this close-fibred organization, so unlike our own free congregational system, the Unitarian Church in Transylvania doubtless owes in no small degree its preservation through the persecuting centuries.

But the centuries of misfortune, we may hope, belong now to the past. To-day there seems to be a general and deep goodwill through the land towards the Unitarians. Well do they deserve any height of prosperity that may be awaiting them. If a new Unitarian church is to be built, the subscription-paper circulates outside, as well as inside, the little community. A Unitarian student of promise, if poor, is helped to a college scholarship in the same way. And at the recent four-hundredth anniversary, in 1910, of their Founder's birth, public sympathy cordially expressed itself—mayors of cities, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist citizens, all taking part. In his address on that occasion Bishop Ferencz said: '*Now* our lines are falling in pleasant

places. There is no danger for us any more in the practice of our religious convictions. Our doctrine, the worship of God in One Person, gradually finds acceptance with many an earnest soul the world over. For creeds and confessions to cause division among us is a thing of the past. Love now prevails over all distinctions of faith.' And the good bishop quaintly and lovingly linked one of our latter-day prophets with theirs in his prayer: 'Spirit of our Teacher and Leader of old' (this to Francis David), 'rest assured that thy prophecy—the prophecy of "Truth never to be baffled in its triumphant course by cross or by sword"—is being realized. . . . Bring this earnest of the spirit to the shades of thy compeers, whose faith on earth thou didst share. And carry our brotherly love especially to the choice spirit of Theodore Parker, who lived to see the fame and glory of his work, and whose hundredth birthday has already been celebrated by our English and American friends.'

After that prayer they surely are '*our* Waldenses!'

NOTES

Page 19

[1] An interesting series of 'Letters and Records of the Jesuits of Transylvania in the time of the Bathory Princes (1571–1613)' is appearing under the editorship of Dr. Endre Veress, a learned young Protestant scholar of Kolozsvár. The first volume contains a life-like description of David as seen by a contemporary of hostile faith. His keen intellect, tenacious memory, thorough knowledge of Scripture, and his prowess in the public doctrinal debates, are especially praised. From this description comes our quotation.

Page 21

[2] The date of this palace disputation and the rejoicing at Kolozsvár over David's victory seems somewhat uncertain. Alexis Jakab, David's biographer, and at one time Professor Boros himself, placed the events in 1568, two months *after* the Edict; and Prof. Joseph H. Allen, in his 'Unitarianism since the Reformation,' followed their leading. But Prof. Boros writes me that he is now inclined—'with our young historians'—to place them in 1567, *before* the Edict and previous to David's first Unitarian publications. This makes the two events part of the preparation of mind that led up to the Edict and rendered it possible. On its face this certainly seems the more probable order.

Page 25

[3] The name 'Unitarian' has been diligently sought, but as yet nowhere found before 1600—then found only as an adjective, '*unitaria religio*,' in a decree of the Transylvanian Diet at Léçfalva. This official use in a decree makes it more than

likely, however, that it had been used before by others, if not by the party itself; while the fact that it is not found earlier among the many names and nicknames applied to the new faith, suggests that it was only *beginning* to come into use at that time. It is quite unlikely that it was ever heard of in David's time. 'We have the texts of the 1568 and 1571 Diets; we have some works of Melius'—David's abusive opponent, sure to pick up and fling a good stoning epithet; 'we have quite a number of David's own works; we have letters which he circulated as bishop of the fourth legalized religion. He never calls himself bishop of the "Unitarian" churches. I have tried with my best power, and can find no trace of the name before 1600' (Prof. Boros).

In the year 1638, in the *Complanatio Deesiana*, it was used in such a way as to become thenceforth the authorized name of the Church. 'In the same year also was drawn up a "*Confessio receptæ Unitariæ Religionis in Transylvania per honorabilem Danielem Beke, superintendentem ejusdem receptæ Unitariæ Religionis.*" The original copy of this Confession of 1638 is preserved in the archives of the Hungarian Unitarian Church at Kolozsvár. The Unitarians were obliged to use the name now to be saved from persecution as "Judaizers"—on whose account we lost at that time about one hundred congregations' (Prof. Boros). But for a long time after that it was a name avoided rather than loved—perhaps from association with Islam. The preferred term was *Unum Deum profitentes*, or some variation or equivalent of this—this term being common in Magyar as well as in Latin. Nicknames and terms of obloquy invented by enemies were many.

It may be added that the preferred terms clearly indicate the purely theologic meaning of

the name. The idea that in its origin the name 'Unitarian' had anything to do with *Uniti* or *Unio*—a 'union' of those professing different beliefs—rose from a guess of the eighteenth century historian, Bod, and seems to be wholly without foundation in fact. (Thus both Prof. Boros and the Rev. Alexander Gordon.)

In Poland the followers of Socinus would never accept the name 'Unitarian'—not even, with their goodwill, the exiled Poles in Transylvania and Amsterdam. *Quos Unitarios vocant,* 'whom they call Unitarians,' says the title-page of their *Bibliotheca*; but the preface contends for 'Catholic Christians' as their only true name. In England the name is first found in manuscripts of 1682; and first appears in print in 1687, in the title of Nye's 'Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians.'

Page 26

4 'Upon the 15th of February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned *all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics.* From this universal doom only a few persons, especially named, were excepted. A proclamation of King Philip II, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the Inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution. . . Three millions of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines. . . . Under this new decree the executions certainly did not slacken. Men in the highest and the humblest positions were daily and hourly dragged to the stake. Alva, in a single letter to Philip, coolly estimated the number of executions which were to take place immediately after the expiration of Holy Week, "at eight hundred heads."' (Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic,* vol. 2, pp. 158, 159.)

Page 27

[5] Ruffini, in his recent 'History of Religious Liberty,' brings out very clearly that the principle of liberty and toleration in Religion was the *Italian* contribution to the Reformation—the Reformation that was so completely crushed out in Italy itself; a fine example of the reparations of history! Nearly all the earliest advocates of the principle—Castellio, Ochino, Acontio, Mino Celso, and the two Socini—were 'humanist refugees' from the Italian side of the Alps. Among all the Confessions and Churches of the Reformation 'to Socinianism alone belongs the glory of having, as early as the sixteenth century, made toleration a fundamental principle of ecclesiastical discipline, and of having determined, more or less immediately, all the subsequent revolutions in favour of religious liberty' (Ruffini, chapter vi).

Page 31

[6] This is summarized from an address by Prof. Boros, who has written a book on 'The Theology of Francis David in 1567,' the year when the Unitarian propaganda began. David was so literal in his loyalty to the Bible that, because he could not find them authorized in Scripture, he gave up child-baptism and cleared the Unitarian churches of their organs.

Page 38

[7] Socinus left the city before the trial began. Years after all was over, he wrote a long defence of his course in his dealings with David, and, so far as himself was concerned, made out a good case. 'I neither consented to any more severe measure against Francis, nor knew of any other design of Blandrata and the brethren in this transaction, than that Blandrata himself would

take care that the Prince should command Francis to be suspended until a general synod should, as had been agreed upon, put an end to this controversy concerning the invocation of Christ. To this I call God to witness.'

Page 42

[8] Blandrata got his 'thirty pieces of silver'; the Prince gave him estates, and he grew very rich. He did not hang himself, but was strangled by his nephew and heir, who was in a hurry to get what was coming. In place of David in prison Blandrata promptly secured as bishop a conservative man, by whom the invocation of Christ and child-baptism were re-established as Unitarian customs. After that he gave little sign of interest in his old faith. The Jesuits were satisfied with him, and it is said that he finally returned to the Roman Catholic Church. There is no need to think of him, or of all those condemning ministers, as insincere in their doctrinal difference with David. Such differences were of major importance in those days. Socinus, for instance, was no hypocrite and no coward. David's new denial *was* an innovation; and the Unitarian Church *was* doubtless 'safer' in the old worship of Jesus. The sentence could hardly have been a surprise to Blandrata, as it was to Socinus; but he may have *meant* his 'Fear not,' and have intended, had David lived, to intercede for his release. At his best, Blandrata seems to be type of the reformer who, when young, has vision, and courage to match it, but who finds it hard to endure a radicalism that outruns his own. Add the subtle temptations that come with repute and position and wealth and the peril of losing them all, and we have the failure, the coward, the truckler, the persecutor—we have a 'Blandrata.'

GTU Library
3 2400 00286 5982

DATE DUE

JAN 21 2003	
APR 09 2003	
JAN 21 2004	

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500

All items are subject to recall.